

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

The withdrawal of the indicated allowability of claims 12, 13, 17, 18, 20 and 21 is acknowledged.

Claim Rejections -35 U.S.C. § 102

The Office Action rejected claims 1, 2, 11-13, 17, 18, 20-23 and 26 under 35 USC § 102(b) as being anticipated by Smith, United States Patent No. 5,605,194.

Smith teaches an independent screwed wellhead apparatus and method to provide for connecting a high pressure casing nipple to internal threads disposed along the bore of the wellhead body to temporarily increased the working pressure capability of the wellhead body. The internal threads are supported by a thick wall of the wellhead body disposed in the lower end of the wellhead body. The lower end of the wellhead body has a higher working pressure than the upper end of the wellhead body. The high pressure casing nipple temporarily isolates the upper end from the high pressure.

Smith therefore teaches an independent screwed wellhead connected directly to a casing of the well. Smith fails to teach or suggest double-locking casing mandrel. To facilitate prosecution of the present application, however, independent claims 1, 11, 12 and 22 are amended to include reference to a sealing nipple above the top pin thread, which is not taught or suggested by Smith. Furthermore, independent claim 2 is cancelled, and the subject matter thereof is incorporated in amended claim 3, which is indicated as being allowable.

Depended claim 5 is amended to depend from amended claim 3.

With respect to independent claim 17, the claim references "a lockdown nut of the lockdown flange rotatably supported by an annular shoulder below a top end of the lockdown flange" (for support, see paragraph 0041, line 6). This structure is neither taught nor suggested by Smith, and the rejection of claim 17 is traversed for at least this reason.

In view of the above-identified amendments, claims 1 and 3-26 which remain pending in this application are considered to be in a condition for immediate allowance. Favorable reconsideration and early issuance of a Notice of Allowance are requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lloyd G. Farr', is written over a horizontal line.

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